

Medical Center and the Wilmington VA Clinic are operating over their budgeted capacity, there is concern that if these facilities are not expanded, they will face difficulties taking new patients. We need to develop a direct and positive attitude to change this system properly and bring our veterans in closer contact with their health care providers!

Secondly, we must put forth actions that will ensure that our rural veterans receive the proper care that they deserve. That is why I am cosponsoring legislation that would set aside a percentage of funds appropriated to the VA medical care funds to be used for highly rural or geographically-remote veterans. The Rural Veterans Access to Care Act would also encourage the Secretary of the VA to use his contract authority to assist highly rural veterans in obtaining health care services closer to home.

In my district, most of the veterans fought in World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf, and they are suffering medical conditions that make traveling any distance extremely difficult, if not impossible. These veterans also have to travel in inclement weather to receive basic health care from the VA. In addition, many times they have to reschedule their appointments, which could mean waiting over a month for a simple test. It is disgraceful that veterans have to travel hundreds of miles to get their blood pressure checked or to have routine blood tests done.

Mr. Speaker, I stand committed to improving health care benefits for our veterans—not only for those who have duly served our country, but also for those valiant soldiers who will become the veterans of tomorrow. That's why I am also cosponsoring the Keep Our Promise to America's Military Retirees Act, which would take an additional step toward restoring adequate health care to military retirees by allowing them to participate in the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program. We must continue to support our promise so that all veterans will receive the health care benefits that they deserve.

In addition, I am supporting legislation, the Assured Funding for Veterans Health Care Act, which would provide for a guaranteed adequate level of funding for veterans health care. Unfortunately, the money that is set aside for VA hospitals and clinics falls under discretionary spending, meaning that there is no guarantee that it will be increased as the demand grows. Without this funding, rural veterans will continue to be served in outdated or understaffed facilities—or continue to receive inadequate health care due to a lack of health care services in their area.

Finally, it's about achievement! Let us make the commitment to achieve new incentives for our veterans. As I talk to veterans in my district, I become increasingly concerned that their needs are simply not being met. As you know, the Department of Veterans Affairs is directing an initiative—the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES)—to redirect resources within the department and address the changing needs of veterans. Recently, the CARES Commission released its report, which the Secretary is in the process of reviewing. While I am pleased that the report effectively recognized access and capacity concerns, I am hopeful that the VA Secretary's final report will provide additional incentives for our veterans.

Specifically, I urge the Secretary to provide not only an expansion of the Fayetteville VA

Medical Center and the expansion of the Wilmington VA Clinic to a satellite outpatient clinic, but also two community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) for my district—one in Supply (Brunswick County) and one in Lumberton (Robeson County). If we could achieve these vital expansions and new facilities, access to care would no longer be a problem and veterans would not be forced to drive long distances to receive vital health care services. This would be a real achievement for the veterans in my district, and I am confident that these initiatives will provide the services that they are lacking now.

Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree that timely access to health care is an important national priority to provide veterans the benefits they earned in military service to our country. As we find ourselves in times that threaten our very freedom, our nation must never forget those who have fought so hard to ensure that our freedom endures. Therefore, I say to my colleagues, let us join together today with a new and positive attitude towards health care for veterans, and let us work together to put forth the necessary actions to help us to achieve our goal! Our veterans are counting on us! And may God's blessings be with you!

IN RECOGNITION OF THE FORTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TIBETAN NATIONAL UPRISING

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, on March 10, 2000, the United States Senate passed a resolution (S. Res. 60) to recognize this day in commemoration of the Tibetans who suffered and died during the Lhasa uprising, which began on this day in 1959. The resolution also reserves this day as an occasion to renew calls by the President, Congress, and other U.S. Government officials on the Government of the People's Republic of China to enter into serious negotiations with the Dalai Lama or his representatives until a peaceful solution, satisfactory to both sides, is achieved.

It has now been 55 years since the Chinese Army invaded Tibet, forcing the then free and independent country to accept the infamous Chinese 17-point agreement in which Tibet was incorporated into China. Under the agreement, China promised to preserve all aspects of freedom in Tibet, including the role of the Dalai Lama. Today, the Chinese Government continues to commit gross violations of human rights in Tibet as well as to show total disregard for their agreement. During the time of Chinese occupation, more than 6,000 monasteries have been destroyed and the monks and nuns who resided in these places have been displaced, exiled, tortured and killed. Not only are the religious leaders persecuted, but the people of Tibet are forced to live in fear of arbitrary arrest, torture and imprisonment without trial.

I would like to use this day to ask the leaders of this country to unite in calling on China to end its abuses against the people of Tibet and to submit the statement made today by his Holiness the Dalai Lama for the RECORD.

STATEMENT OF HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA ON THE FORTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF TIBETAN NATIONAL UPRISING DAY

Today we commemorate the 45th anniversary of the Tibetan People's Uprising of 1959. I pay tribute to the many brave Tibetan men and women who have sacrificed their lives for the cause of Tibetan freedom. They will always be remembered. This year marks 50 years since my visit to mainland China in 1954 to meet with the then Chinese leaders, especially Mao Tse-tung. I remember very well that I embarked on the journey with deep concerns about the future of Tibet. I was assured by all the leaders I met that the Chinese presence in Tibet was to work for the welfare of the Tibetans and "to help develop" Tibet. While in China I also learned about internationalism and socialism which deeply impressed me. So I returned to Tibet with optimism and confidence that a peaceful and mutually beneficial coexistence could be worked out. Unfortunately, soon after my return China was embroiled in political unrest unleashed by radical political campaigns. These developments impacted the Chinese policy on Tibet resulting in more repression and rigidity leading finally to the Tibetan People's Uprising in March 1959.

My hope is that this year may see a significant breakthrough in our relations with the Chinese Government. As in 1954, so also today, I am determined to leave no stone unturned for seeking a mutually beneficial solution that will address both Chinese concerns as well as achieve for the Tibetan people a life in freedom, peace and dignity. Despite the decades of separation the Tibetan people continue to place tremendous trust and hope in me. I feel a great sense of responsibility to act as their free spokesman. In this regard, the fact that President Hu Jintao has personal knowledge about the situation and problems in Tibet can be a positive factor in resolving the Tibetan issue. I am therefore willing to meet with today's leaders of the People's Republic of China in the effort to secure a mutually acceptable solution to the Tibetan issue.

My envoys have established direct contact with the Chinese government on two trips to China in September 2002 and in May/June 2003. This is a positive and welcome development, which was initiated during the Presidency of Jiang Zemin. The issue of Tibet is complex and of crucial importance to Tibetan as well as Chinese peoples. Consequently, it requires careful considerations and serious deliberations on both sides before taking any decisions. It will take time, patience and determination to lead this process to a successful conclusion. However, I consider it of highest importance to maintain the momentum and to intensify and deepen this process through regular face-to-face meetings and substantive discussions. This is the only way to dispel existing distrust and misconception and to build trust and confidence.

Consequently, I have instructed my envoys to visit China at the earliest date to continue the process. I hope that they will be able to make this trip without much delay. This will help in building trust and confidence in the present process among Tibetans as well as among our friends and supporters around the world—many of whom remain strongly skeptical about the willingness of Beijing to engage in a genuine process of rapprochement and dialogue.

The current situation in Tibet benefits neither the Tibetans nor the government of the People's Republic of China. The development projects that the Chinese Government has launched in Tibet—purportedly to benefit the Tibetan people—are however, having

negative effects on the Tibetan people's distinct cultural, religious and linguistic identity. More Chinese settlers are coming to Tibet resulting in the economic marginalization of the Tibetan people and the sinicization of their culture. Tibetans need to see an improvement in the quality of their life, the restoration of Tibet's pristine environment and the freedom to decide an appropriate model of development.

I welcome the release of Ani Phuntsok Nyidrol, even as we recognize the injustice of her sentence and continue to urge for the release of all political prisoners in Tibet. The human rights situation in Tibet has not seen any marked improvement. Human rights violations in Tibet have a distinct character of preventing Tibetans as a people from asserting their own identity and culture. The violations are a result of policies of racial and cultural discrimination and religious intolerance.

Against this background we are encouraged and grateful that many individuals, governments and parliaments around the world have been urging the People's Republic of China to resolve the question of Tibet through peaceful negotiations. Led by the European Union and the United States there is growing realization in the international community that the issue of Tibet is not one of human rights violations alone but of deeper political nature which needs to be resolved through negotiations.

I am also encouraged by the recent improvements in the relationship between India and China. It has always been my belief that better understanding and relations between India and China, the two most populous nations of the world is of vital importance for peace and stability in Asia in particular and in the world in general. I believe that improved relations between India and China will create a more conducive political environment for the peaceful resolution of the Tibetan issue. I also strongly believe India can and should play a constructive and influential role in resolving the Tibetan problem peacefully. My 'Middle-Way-Approach' should be an acceptable policy on Tibet for India as it addresses the Tibetan issue within the framework of the People's Republic of China. A solution to the Tibetan issue through this approach would help India to resolve many of her disputes with China, too.

It is 54 years since the establishment of the People's Republic of China. During Mao Zedong's period much emphasis was put on ideology, while Deng Xiaoping concentrated primarily on economic development. His successor Jiang Zemin broadened the base of the Communist Party by enabling wealthy people to become part of the Communist Party under his theory of "The Three Represents". In recent times Hu Jintao and his colleagues were able to achieve a smooth transition of leadership. During the past decades China has been able to make much progress. But there have also been shortcomings and failures in various fields, including in the economy. One of the main causes of the shortcomings and failures seems to be the inability to deal with and act according to the true and real situation. In order to know the real and true situation it is essential that there be free information.

China is undergoing a process of deep change. In order to affect this change smoothly and without chaos and violence I believe it is essential that there be more openness and greater freedom of information and proper awareness among the general public. We should seek truth from facts—facts that are not falsified. Without this China cannot hope to achieve genuine stability. How can there be stability if things must be hidden and people are not able to speak out their true feelings?

I am hopeful that China will become more open and eventually more democratic. I have for many years advocated that the change and transformation of China should take place smoothly and without major upheavals. This is in the interest of not only the Chinese people but also the world community.

China's emergence as a regional and global power is also accompanied by concerns, suspicion and fears about her power. Hosting the Olympic Games and World Exposition will not help to dispel these concerns. Unless Beijing addresses the lack of basic civil and political rights and freedoms of its citizens, especially with regard to minorities, China will continue to face difficulties in reassuring the world that she is a peaceful, responsible, constructive and forward-looking power.

The Tibetan issue represents both a challenge and an opportunity for a maturing China to act as an emerging global player with vision and values of openness, freedom, justice and truth. A constructive and flexible approach to the issue of Tibet will go a long way in creating a political climate of trust, confidence and openness, both domestically and internationally. A peaceful resolution of the Tibetan issue will have wide-ranging positive impacts on China's transition and transformation onto a modern, open and free society. There is now a window of opportunity for the Chinese leadership to act with courage and farsightedness in resolving the Tibetan issue once and for all.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and gratitude for this consistent support that we have been receiving throughout the world. I would also like to express once again on behalf of the Tibetans our appreciation and immense gratitude to the people and the Government of India for their unwavering and unmatched generosity and support.

With my prayers for the well-being of all sentient beings.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO ANTHI POULOS JONES

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a sad heart that I rise to pay tribute to the passing of a dedicated scholar and public servant and dear friend from Potomac, Maryland. Anthi Poulos Jones, born in Greece and raised in New Hampshire, recently passed away at the age of 57. Anthi dedicated her life to government service and the challenging legal profession. I am honored today to bring her contributions to the attention of this body of Congress and this nation.

After graduating from Windham College in Vermont, Anthi went on to receive a master's degree in Russian Studies and a law degree from American University. As a perpetual scholar, Anthi took up additional studies in international law at Georgetown University and the prestigious Hague Academy of International Law in the Netherlands.

Throughout her pursuit of knowledge, she also worked as a legislative assistant and staff lawyer for Senator Thomas J. McIntyre, Charles McC. Mathias Jr., John Glenn Jr., and Hank Brown. During the 1990's, Anthi worked for my office, where she served as a valuable member of my staff and counsel. Anthi's dedi-

cation and ceaseless work ethic has benefited many citizens of Colorado. After working on my staff, she was appointed as a scholar-in-residence at the Law Library of Congress where she focused on war crimes and reparations for property looted in wartime.

Anthi was an active patron of the arts and a devoted patriot. She served as the founder and chairwoman of the Committee on World War II Art Claims and the US Committee on the Parthenon where she advocated for the return of ancient Greek statues that were removed from Greece and taken to England in the 19th century.

Mr. Speaker, Anthi Poulos Jones was a dedicated scholar and government steward who selflessly served her community and country, and I am honored to pay tribute to such an industrious public servant. Her lifetime of service is an incredible model for America's youth. My thoughts and prayers go out to her family during this time of bereavement.

CONGRATULATING JIM WALTZE ON BECOMING PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like today to congratulate Jim Waltze, the CEO of construction industry leader Griffith Company, on being selected as president of the Associated General Contractors of America. Mr. Waltze is a visionary leader in an industry that is one of the pillars of our economy.

Jim Waltze started in contracting at the age of 21, and in 1973 at age 28 he joined the Griffith Company, one of the top major construction firms in Southern California. His career at Griffith has been marked by regular promotions—to Chief Estimator in 1975, vice president/district manager in 1977 and executive vice president in 1986. He was named president of the company in 1992, and added the titles of chief executive officer and board chairman in 1997.

Under his leadership, Griffith Company has taken on some of the largest port projects in Southern California, including the \$37 million Seaside Project for the Port of Los Angeles and the \$71 million Pier T Project for the Port of Long Beach. He has been the driving force for innovation at the company, setting up a company wide strategic planning process and the development of divisions for specialty structures, underground projects and materials. The company has been a pioneer in computerized estimating and project management systems.

The contributions of Jim Waltze go beyond the success of his company, however. He has been involved for most of his career in organizations that promote the economic health and high standards of the contracting industry. He has been a board member of the Associated General Contractors of California for two decades, and was elected to the National Board of Directors for the Associated General Contractors of America in 1987.

The positions Jim Waltze has taken on with the AGC range from the Chairman of the